

Message Text

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ACTION AF-10

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 NEA-10 IO-13 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00
PM-05 H-01 INR-07 L-03 NSAE-00 PA-01 PRS-01
SP-02 SS-15 NSCE-00 USIE-00 INRE-00 SSO-00 /081 W
-----105555 250928Z /23/66

O R 231700Z NOV 77
FM AMEMBASSY NOUAKCHOTT
TO SECSTATE WASHDC NIACT IMMEDIATE 8498
INFO AMEMBASSY ALGIERS
AMEMBASSY DAKAR
AMEMBASSY MADRID
AMEMBASSY PARIS
AMEMBASSY RABAT
USMISSION USUN NY
CINCEUR

CONFIDENTIAL NOUAKCHOTT 2736

CORRECTED COPY TEXT

CINCEUR FOR POLAD

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PBOR, SS, MR, AG, MO, FR
SUBJECT: SAHARA WATCH: POLISARIO ATTACKS ZOUERATE SUPPLY TRAIN

1. POLISARIO FORCES ATTACKED ZOUERATE-BOUND TRAIN ON
NOVEMBER 22 BETWEEN CHUUM TUNNEL AND TOUAJIL AT ROUGHTLY SAME
LOCATION FRENCH AND MAURITANIAN TECHNICIANS WERE KIDNAPPED ON
OCTOBER 25. ATTACK TOOK PLACE APPROXIMATELY AT NOON AND
RESULTED IN AT LEAST FIVE MAURITANIAN SOLDIERS KILLED AMONG THE
68 WHO ACCOMPANIED THE TRAIN FOR "PROTECTION". NINE OTHER TROOPS
WERE WOUNDED AND TEN MORE MISSING AND PRESUMED CAPTURED. TWO
CIVILIANS RIDING ILLEGALLY ON TRAIN WERE ALSO KILLED.
MAURITANIAN GOVERNMENT CLAIMS ELEVEN POLISARIO WERE KILLED
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AND TWENTY WOUNDED.

2. SHORTLY AFTER TRAIN WAS AMBUSHED, POLISARIO LAUNCHED A
HARASSING ATTACK ON MILITARY OUTPOST AT TOUAJIL, 25 KILOMETERS
NORTH OF AMBUSH SITE. RAID WAS PROBABLY DESIGNED TO PREVENT
MAURITANIAN MILITARY INTERVENTION OF REINFORCEMENT OF TRAIN.
TWELVE MAURITANIANS WERE WOUNDED. EIGHT POLISARIO ALLEGEDLY

WERE "OBSERVED" KILLED, BUT THEIR BODIES WERE NOT RECOVERED.

3. THE SUPPLY TRAIN WHICH WAS ATTACKED CARRIED GASOLINE, IOL, REPAIR MATERIAL, AND FOODSTUFFS FOR ZOUERATE AND VARIOUS RAIL LINE OUTPOSTS. NO DETAILS ARE AVAILABLE ON PHYSICAL DAMAGE. (TRAIN NORMALLY CONSISTS OF ONE LOCOMOTIVE AND JWT CARS AND MAKES ONE RUN A WEEK. SUPPLY WAS THE ONLY ROLLING STOCK IN OPERATION ALONG IRON ORE RAILWAY SINCE OCTOBER 26 WEHN TRAINS WERE ORDERED STOPPED BY SNIM.) NORMAL IRON ORE TRAIN RUNS WERE TO BEGIN AGAIN ON NOVEMFRR 23-24. POLISARIO AMBUSH WILL UNDOUBTEDLY CANCEL THOSE PLANS AND ELIMINATE FURTHER SUPPLY TRAINS FOR MOMENT. MEANWHILE IRON ORE RESERVES AT NOUADHIBOU ARE NEAR DEPLETION. DEPENDING ON THE NUMBER OF SHIPS THAT ARRIVE OR DIVERT TO OTHER PORT MARKETS, THERE REMAINS APPROXIMATELY ONE MORE WEEK'S SUPPLY AT THE PORT.

HANDYSIDE

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Message Attributes

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Sent Date: 23-Nov-1977 12:00:00 am
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